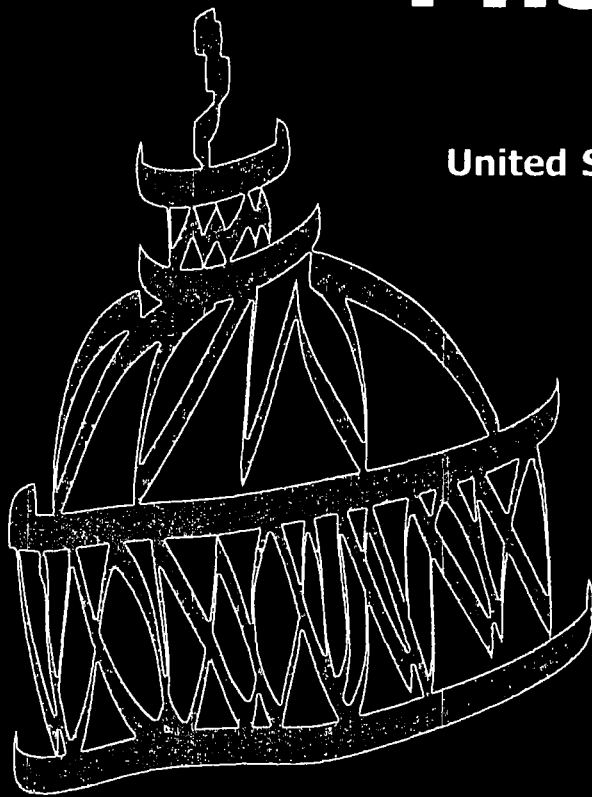


Fulfilling Our Charitable Mission

a report to the
United States Congress
2000



PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

www.ymca.net

Visit our web site—it features a section devoted to our policy priorities such as child care and juvenile delinquency prevention.

The YMCA of the USA Public Policy department offers the following publications:

Quality Matters—The Path to Early Learning and Development

This guide boils down quality in child care to five basic areas. It also features a checklist to help identify a quality program.

YMCA Model Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Early Intervention Programs

This booklet highlights more than a dozen model juvenile justice programs.

The Nation's Report Card: Assessing Risks to the American Family

A compilation of over 500 studies, this report covers child care and education, health, violence and economic conditions.

YMCA Involvement in Welfare Reform

This booklet provides an overview of YMCA welfare reform programs.

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YMCA

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legislative priorities

As the nation's largest youth-serving organization, the YMCA recognizes its role in helping America build strong kids, strong families and strong communities.

▼ **Child Care.** The YMCA is the nation's largest child care provider and advocates for increased investments in high quality child care for America's working families.

▼ **Juvenile Justice, Crime and Gangs.** YMCAs serve nearly 9 million young people under the age of 18 each year and advocate for increased investments in juvenile delinquency prevention and early intervention programs.

Taken independently or collectively, each of the YMCA's mission-related legislative priorities represents the commitment of YMCAs to meeting the unique needs of the communities in which we serve.

▼ **Substance Abuse.** Hundreds of YMCAs around the country provide innovative solutions to all aspects of the substance abuse problem—from prevention to early intervention, and right on through to treatment.

▼ **Youth Health and Fitness.** YMCAs know that if children are to lead successful lives they must be drug-free, self-confident and self-reliant enough to take responsibility for their health.

▼ **Youth Service.** YMCAs believe that government should support initiatives that strengthen the service ethic and challenge all to respond, collectively as well as individually, to

the social and environmental needs of their communities.

▼ **Preserving the YMCAs' tax-exempt status.** The tax-exempt status of our nation's YMCAs allows the YMCA movement to provide a variety of services—including health and fitness—designed to meet the needs of a broad cross-section of our American community.



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substance abuse

YMCAs believe that preventing substance abuse is one of the most important ways to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. Every YMCA youth program incorporates messages to prevent substance abuse. These programs offer a character-building alternative to substance abuse and promote the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. YMCAs also provide substance abuse programs for targeted groups of young people, usually in collaboration with other community agencies.

One example of the YMCA's most successful substance abuse programs is Wilmington, Delaware's **YMCA Alcohol and Drug Prevention Program**. This program of the YMCA Resource Center is designed as an alternative to sentencing for youthful offenders who have been arrested on drug or alcohol-related offenses. Youth participate in YMCA prevention education for approximately 16 hours a week. This education program involves such activities as conflict resolution, life skill development, and substance abuse prevention.



As a matter of public policy, the YMCA has worked with policymakers in the promotion of the following principles:

- ▼ recognize alcohol and tobacco as key elements of the substance abuse problem
- ▼ acknowledge that every child is at risk
- ▼ give high priority to prevention efforts
- ▼ provide for early intervention
- ▼ ensure access to treatment programs
- ▼ recognize the importance of involving families
- ▼ increase public information about the risks of tobacco and alcohol
- ▼ promote research
- ▼ promote community collaboration
- ▼ involve community-based organizations

These guiding principles lead the YMCA to take a proactive role in developing youth development legislation and in advocating for its introduction and adoption in the U.S. Congress. In addition, the YMCA took a leadership role in efforts to pass comprehensive bipartisan legislation designed to reduce teenage smoking.



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partnerships

All 2,283 YMCAs are committed to serving all people in the community—all ages, incomes, and abilities. In order to meet the many and varied needs of their communities, YMCAs often partner with neighborhood organizations. For instance, YMCAs partner with local women's shelters to provide GED classes, job training, welfare-to-work services, and health and wellness programs. Often, YMCAs provide physical education classes for youth in nearby alternative schools or wrap-around child care for Head Start programs in their area. Across the country:

- ▼ 1,214 YMCAs work with local government agencies
- ▼ 437 YMCAs work with juvenile courts
- ▼ 301 YMCAs work with public housing developments
- ▼ 1,609 YMCAs work with elementary schools
- ▼ 1,258 YMCAs work with middle schools
- ▼ 1,080 YMCAs work with high schools
- ▼ 722 YMCAs work with colleges or universities
- ▼ 967 YMCAs work with parks and recreation
- ▼ 782 YMCAs work with hospitals
- ▼ 992 YMCAs work with churches

To facilitate partnerships at the local level, the YMCA of the USA collaborates with the following charitable organizations or government agencies (a partial listing):

Administration for Children and Families
 America's Promise
 Census Bureau
 Corporation for National and Community Service
 DeWitt Wallace Foundation
 Domestic Policy Council
 Independent Sector
 Juvenile Justice Coalition
 Mott Foundation
 National Assembly of Voluntary Health & Social Welfare Organizations



National Association for
 the Education of
 Young Children
 National Collaboration for
 Youth
 National Library
 Association
 National Office of Child
 Support
 Enforcement
 National School Age Care
 Alliance
 Office of Juvenile Justice
 and Delinquency
 Prevention
 Office of National Drug
 Control Policy
 The Search Institute

U.S. Department of Education
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
 U.S. Department of Justice

In addition, to strengthen the YMCA's impact and expand its ability to serve more youth and families, the following corporations are proud supporters of the Y movement:

FritoLay, Inc.
 JC Penney
 PepsiCo (the YMCA is PepsiCo's *Charity of Choice*)
 Pepsi-Cola, Inc.
 Tropicana, Inc.



YMCA

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welfare reform

Together, 2,283 YMCAs make up the largest not-for-profit community service organization in America. YMCAs are at the heart of community life in neighborhoods and towns across the nation. They work to meet the health and social service needs of nearly 17 million men, women, and children through a variety of value-based programs and services.

YMCAs are involved in welfare reform efforts in a host of ways, including literacy training, job training and placement, family counseling, GED training, and child care. YMCAs serve both families on welfare and working poor families, based on the needs of their community.

Providing Child Care

YMCAs together constitute the largest child care provider in the country—serving nearly half a million children and their families. In turn, nearly 700,000 adults are able to continue working, knowing their children are being cared for in a healthy, safe and nurturing environment. Nearly 50% of children in YMCA child care come from families whose annual income is less than \$25,000 a year.

Affecting Policy

In addition to providing direct services to youth and families, YMCAs are actively involved in helping states develop effective and appropriate policies and strategies on a variety of welfare-related issues:

One Story

Y's CHOICES, a program designed to assist people in their transition from welfare to independence, is located at the YMCA of Cumberland, Maryland. The program focuses on removing barriers to employment.

The YMCA provides affordable, licensed child care, transportation assistance, supportive housing, and job and career seminars for Y's CHOICES participants. Computer training, GED classes, and the Maryland External Diploma Program offer participants an opportunity to further their education and receive their diploma.

In the words of Marian, one of the many Y's CHOICES successes, "the opportunity for training at the YMCA changed my life and attitude." After years on public assistance, Marian—a 36-year-old single mother—is now gainfully employed and is no longer dependent on welfare. She continues to attend support groups, and her 10-year-old son John is enrolled in after-school care programs at the Y Monday through Friday. Transportation and meals are included for John in this program, which he also enjoys during school-out days, unexpected school closings and holidays. These continued support services through the YMCA enable Marian to keep working and stay off welfare.

- ▼ Securing affordable and quality child care
- ▼ Developing comprehensive job training programs
- ▼ Finding employment for families transitioning off welfare
- ▼ Developing counseling services for families in need

Partnering

YMCAs recognize the fact that for families to successfully move from welfare to work, communities must coordinate their efforts to meet the growing and diverse challenges facing families in need. YMCAs often partner with state and local governments, businesses and other not-for-profit organizations to help develop a seamless web of services for low-income working families and families transitioning off welfare.



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YMCA city agenda

A Nationwide Strategy to Support YMCA Work in Urban Areas

Where we are today—

YMCAs:

- ▼ reach 9 million children in out-of-school time
- ▼ serve 500,000 kids a day in child care, making YMCAs the largest providers of child care in the country
- ▼ involve 1 in every 10 teen nationwide
- ▼ mobilize more than 580,000 volunteers every year

YCITY AGENDA™
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Where we want to go—

The YMCA is committed to serving the critical needs of urban youth and families. The City Agenda will:

- ▼ ensure our cities' youth learn to read by the third grade
- ▼ develop a signature, middle school youth program
- ▼ position the YMCA to serve 1 in 5 teens in America
- ▼ build diverse teams of staff and volunteers to serve all our communities
- ▼ develop new resources and partnerships to expand YMCA work with disadvantaged youth

*The YMCA will
serve 1 in 5 teens in
America.*

City Agenda programs will focus on—

Literacy: YMCAs will incorporate literacy efforts into school-age child care and summer programs, utilizing a variety of literacy curricula.

Youth Development: YMCAs will sponsor middle school after-school programs focused on

safe environments, leadership, values, academic performance, and health.

Teen Action Agenda: YMCAs will provide a host of programs that will showcase the importance of teens and teen work in the new millennium. Teen programs will focus on:

- ▼ Safety and well-being
- ▼ Leadership and service learning
- ▼ Jobs, careers, and life skills

The YMCA's new City Agenda will be based on successful model YMCA programs. For example:

YMCA Holton Youth Center, YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee

The YMCA Holton Youth Center provides community programming to Milwaukee's Riverwest neighborhood where juvenile crime and gang activity abounds. With a solid infrastructure now in place, the YMCA Holton Youth Center is strengthening its connection to the community it serves through family nights, sports leagues, GED and Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) programs, as well as the Hang Tough antidrug campaign and the Youth Volunteer Corps.

Virtual Y, YMCA of Greater New York

The *Virtual Y* is a school-based, YMCA after-school literacy program. The program is designed to improve students' reading and math skills and school attendance, as well as promote positive changes in behavior. The program supports children's education through student learning activities that include a reading club, math, and strategy games, journal writing, drama, computer skills, environmental education and YMCA Youth and Government. Values are developed by involving youth in discussions on respect, responsibility, honesty, and caring. Health awareness is promoted through instructional sports, youth and fitness, and a monthly focus on substance abuse prevention.



YMCA

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juvenile justice



Local YMCAs have long worked with children, youth and families in high-risk communities throughout the country. Today, YMCAs boast over 400 collaborations with juvenile courts, 300

*YMCAs boast
over 400
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with juvenile
courts and
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housing
authorities.*

collaborations with public housing authorities, and nearly 3,000 collaborations with elementary and middle schools. YMCA programs include mentoring, after-school programs, conflict resolution, and suspension intervention.

As a matter of public policy, the YMCA has been the leading national advocate for increased investments in delinquency **prevention** programs and initiatives.

The YMCA is committed to the reauthorizing of the **Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act** and to creating a **Delinquency Prevention Block Grant**.

Many YMCAs offer model delinquency prevention and early intervention programs. For example:

YMCA Community Action Project (Y-CAP)

In Nashville, Tennessee, the YMCA Community Action Project (Y-CAP) offers early intervention for highly at-risk youth and their families. The goals of the program are to give high-risk children and youth a better way of life, to encourage and help them in their pursuit of education, and to give them a foundation of spiritual and moral strength. The Y-CAP program is divided into 5 components that include a community-based boys program, an aftercare program, a group home, a detention center, and a community-based girls program. Y-CAP enjoys a strong partnership with Nashville's juvenile court system.

YMCA Status Offender Court Alternatives Program (SOCAP)

In a model partnership between the Fort Wayne, Indiana, YMCA, the county juvenile probation department and local schools, the YMCA Status Offender Court Alternatives Program (SOCAP) offers counseling and community services to status offenders, potential offenders and their families. In an independent evaluation of the YMCA SOCAP program, evaluators concluded that nearly 70 percent of program participants did not reenter the court system.



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YMCAs are first and foremost volunteer organizations. To put it in perspective, not every YMCA has a building but every YMCA has volunteers. All 2,283 YMCAs are volunteer-founded, volunteer-based, and volunteer-led. Local volunteers establish YMCAs—not the YMCA of the USA—and local volunteers run YMCAs, continually ensuring that YMCAs are meeting the unique needs of their communities. Volunteers are the heart of every YMCA and that is why YMCAs are at the heart of community life in more than 10,000 communities nationwide.

Volunteers have been YMCAs' greatest strength for 150 years. In fact, the YMCA movement was founded by a volunteer and didn't have any paid staff until the founding of its 51st YMCA. Each year, YMCAs' commitment to volunteers grows stronger.

- ▼ Last year 580,000 volunteers enabled YMCAs to reach out to nearly 17 million people of all ages, incomes and abilities.
- ▼ The number of YMCA volunteers grew by 14% last year and 10% the year before.

YMCAs are continually looking for new and better ways to recruit volunteers. In 1997, YMCAs made up the largest contingent attending the President's Summit for America's Future. Just two years later, YMCAs have already met their Summit pledge to serve a million more kids and Ys are close to meeting their pledge to recruit 200,000 more volunteers by 2001. Ys have achieved this by working with Colin Powell's America's Promise and launching the nationwide *Commitment to Volunteers* campaign—featuring the first-ever national public service advertising in YMCA history.

In other efforts to promote volunteerism, the YMCA of the USA recently unveiled Membership by Design. The goal of this program is to encourage all members to become

committed partners to their YMCA and to their community—so every person who walks through YMCA doors is considered a potential volunteer. Also, YMCAs offer time-crunched families the chance to volunteer together and design volunteer projects to bring older adults together with kids and teens.

YMCA volunteers don't just volunteer in YMCA-run programs. Ys are one of the leading service learning organizations. Service learning uses the community as a classroom, encouraging civic responsibility, volunteerism, leadership and character development. Because

volunteers identify objectives and outcomes, often the volunteer experience is more meaningful. Recently, the YMCA of the USA formed a national partnership with the Pew Charitable Trust to set up local programs for young adults to learn about, practice and promote involvement in their communities and the democratic process. Service learning is for

all ages, although it's particularly popular with young people.

One the Y's most successful programs that incorporates service learning is the Earth Service Corps. Founded in 1989, the Earth Service Corps now boasts thousands of teens in thirty states. Each year participants (almost half of whom are from low-income families) contribute

200,000 hours of service. By running recycling

YEARTH SERVICE CORPS

We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities

projects, planting trees, adopting streams and writing elected officials, these young people learn science as well as become future volunteers and leaders.

Earth Service Corps is just one of hundreds of YMCA programs that depend on volunteers. Child care, literacy, mentoring and countless other programs exist because of the service and dedication of our volunteers. From helping Civil War troops more than a century ago to helping victims of Hurricane Mitch and international disaster relief efforts today, YMCAs remain first and foremost volunteer organizations.



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YCHILD CARE™

We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

Everyday more than 13 million preschoolers attend child care in the United States, and there are approximately 24 million school-age children whose parents either work or go to school.

Everyday millions of American parents worry about how to make sure their children get the high quality child care services they need.

Everyday YMCAs are there to help. Together, 2,283 YMCAs make up the largest child care provider in the country, serving nearly half a million children a year in child care programs at over 9,000 sites.

Overall, YMCAs provide family-centered, values-based comprehensive programs for over 9 million young people during their out-of-school time—including before and after-school child care and weekend and summer activities. Activities at most YMCAs include mentoring, gang prevention, teen camp, and youth sports.

YMCAs are dedicated to providing high quality, affordable child care to American families. Ys do this directly through quality child care programs, but Ys also work to affect child care policy at the local, state and federal levels.

YMCAs advocate for increased investments in high quality child care for America's working families. Investments are greatly needed to ensure that child care is available and affordable to all who need it while serving the developmental, social, and education needs of their children.

As the largest provider of child care in the nation, YMCAs have the responsibility to share with policymakers their experiences and expertise on this issue that is so important to so many Americans. YMCAs believe that government and the private sector should work together to develop policies that assist families in their primary task of raising children.



Some important facts about YCHILD CARE™

- ▼ Nearly 50% of children in YMCA child care come from families whose annual income is less than \$25,000 a year.
- ▼ About 40% of children in YMCA child care come from single-parent homes.
- ▼ YMCA child care is affordable to the members of the community, and those who cannot afford it are given financial assistance when possible.
- ▼ YMCA child care helps children grow physically, mentally and spiritually. YMCA programs include character development, international education, health and fitness, environmental awareness, school readiness, diversity, and community service.
- ▼ YMCA child care supports families through community collaborations with other social service agencies—providing additional support for children and their families.
- ▼ YMCA child care supports parents through regular activities and opportunities for parental involvement.
- ▼ YMCAs are dedicated to developing and maintaining quality child care staff. YMCA child care staff regularly pursue ongoing professional development training as a requirement of their positions.



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YMCA of the USA

Public Policy

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